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REPUBLICAN ECONOMIC POLICIES

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, with bleak news about the economy continuing to mount, it is no surprise that 25 percent of Americans say their economic situation has not improved in the last 5 years, and 31 percent say they have fallen backward. These represent the highest numbers for the Pew Research Center survey since the question was first asked in 1964.

Economic uncertainty within the middle class is a result of President Bush's economic policies. For 6 years, Republicans have offered tax cuts to the wealthy, refused to close corporate tax loopholes, and even defended multi-billion dollar tax subsidies for big oil companies.

House Democrats reject an economic policy that showers billions of dollars on unnecessary tax breaks to corporate interests and to millionaires, while middle-class families are ignored. This year's Democratic budget makes middle class tax relief a priority by calling for the extension of middle-income tax cuts, such as the child tax credit and marriage penalty relief.

Democrats have also been working hard to close corporate tax loopholes and end costly waste, fraud and abuse. Madam Speaker, Democrats are fighting to put the Tax Code back on the side of the working family.

TAX DAY

(Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, yesterday millions of Americans responsibly filed their taxes with the IRS. At the same time, House Democrats pushed legislation for the largest tax increase in history.

While middle-income families are balancing tight budgets and bracing for an economic crunch, Congress is hastily increasing taxes to keep up with Federal spending.

Madam Speaker, we need to complete an overhaul of the tax-and-spend system in Washington. For taxpayers to keep more of their hard-earned money, the key is to tighten government spending overall now. Next, we need to implement a tax system to revive and stimulate the economy for the long term. This involves offering permanent tax relief for married couples, families with children, small businesses, and putting an end to the death tax.

Reforming the tax system through tax relief will boost the economy, increase revenues, and promote job growth.

American families are acting responsibly with their money. We need to do the same.

CRISIS OF LEADERSHIP

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, once again this misguided Democrat majority is looking to set a record. But like their tally for broken promises and historic tax increases, this isn't a record of which anyone should be proud. No, Madam Speaker, this Democrat leadership is overseeing the record price of gasoline.

Today, the national average for gas reached \$3.44 a gallon, an all-time high. The American people want to know what Congress is going to do about it, but a crisis of leadership in this Congress continues to leave American families struggling to fill up their tank.

Under this leadership, the price at the pump has shot up more than a dollar a gallon in just 16 months. Now on the campaign trail, they talked about a commonsense plan to bring down gasoline prices. Yet instead of easing the pain at the pump, this majority offers only more gas taxes and less domestic production, and the gas bill only rises.

Madam Speaker, the American people demand relief, and their pleas are being ignored. That is the definition of leadership lacking.

WELCOMING POPE BENEDICT XVI

(Mr. DENT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DENT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to welcome Pope Benedict to the United States for his first visit since becoming Pope in 2005. At this moment, the Pope is at the White House. This historic visit is a significant moment in history for our country, and an important opportunity for the 65 million American Catholics across the country to build a stronger rapport with their spiritual leader.

For one of my constituents, my friend and neighbor, Dr. Brennan Pursell, the Pontiff's visit is particularly special. Although Dr. Pursell has never met the Pope, he shares an intimate connection with him.

Dr. Pursell, a professor of history at DeSales University in the Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania, has spent the past 3 years researching and writing about the upbringing, development, and motivations of Joseph Ratzinger, the man we know today as Pope Benedict.

Dr. Pursell's book, "Benedict of Bavaria, An Intimate Portrait of the Pope and his Homeland," tells the story of a gifted intellectual and spiritual man who has been shaped by the rich traditions of Bavarian culture and deep devotion to the Catholic faith.

The portrait that Dr. Pursell paints in his book will help us all understand more about who the Pope is and what informs his perspectives.

I commend my constituents, Dr. Pursell; his wife, Irmgard, who is a German national; their son, Benedict; and daughter, Elena, for their dedication and for Brennan's significant contribution to history and the Catholic faith in capturing the story of Benedict of Bavaria.

I join with my constituents in warmly welcoming the Pope to our great country. I encourage everybody to take a look at this wonderful work "Benedict of Bavaria" by Dr. Brennan Pursell, my good friend and neighbor.

SANCTUARY CITIES SHOULD LOSE FEDERAL FUNDING

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, American taxpayers ought not be footing the bill for sanctuary cities to serve as safe havens for illegal immigrants, especially hardened criminals.

Sanctuary cities do not allow money or resources to be used to enforce Federal immigration laws. Police or other employees cannot inquire about immigration status. An example is San Francisco as a sanctuary city.

I support the CLEAR Act authored by MARSHA BLACKBURN. The act would empower local law enforcement agencies in the fight against illegal immigration. Under her bill, sanctuary cities would lose Federal crime funding unless local governments rescind the policies that prohibit local law enforcement from working with the Department of Homeland Security.

Illegal immigrants know they are safe from deportation. If these cities refuse to enforce the law, especially when it comes to criminals, it ought to cost them.

This is a first step, and I urge the House to move forward with this legislation. Americans deserve our full support.

H-2B IS A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

(Mrs. DRAKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. DRAKE. Madam Speaker, H-2B is a legal, temporary worker program that has been very successful in providing our Nation's small businesses with the workforce they need during peak business seasons. However, an important provision expired last September.

Many in Congress have acted in support of legislation that would have fixed this escalating problem. Bills, amendments, and discharge petitions have been introduced as early as last March; yet, no action.

Yesterday, the House passed an extension of the Religious Worker Visa Program while many of our Nation's small and seasonal businesses are still struggling to find workers, and Congress has responded with nothing but a hearing.